ARIZONA CRIMINAL JUSTICE COMMISSION

FY2008 GRANT PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENT

Gerald Hardt Memorial Criminal Justice Records Improvement Program

Eligibility
State agencies, county, local, and tribal agencies that meet the eligibility requirements are eligible to apply

Deadline
All applications are due by 3:00 p.m. on June 8, 2007

Assistance
If you have any questions about this grant solicitation
or are having difficulty with the online grant management system,
contact Janice Simpson, grant coordinator, at
(602) 364-1186 or jsimpson@azcjc.gov

INTRODUCTION

The Arizona Criminal Justice Commission (ACJC) is publishing this notice to announce the initiation of the Arizona Criminal Justice Records Improvement Program for FY2008. This program is designed to implement various projects identified by the state's Criminal Justice Records Improvement Plan (CJRIP), which has been developed and submitted to the United States Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance.

The goal of the Arizona Criminal Justice Records Improvement Program is to improve the quality, completeness, and accessibility of the state's criminal justice records systems, with an emphasis on criminal history information. High priority is given to encouraging further automation and establishing uniform, automated procedures for reporting arrests and/or disposition information to the criminal history records central state repository. Criminal justice agencies are strongly encouraged to integrate and share criminal justice records data with other criminal justice agencies, in an effort to increase efficiency and improve the quality of criminal justice information.

Arizona state law requires the use of criminal history records information in decisions concerning bail, offense upgrade, sentence enhancement, criminal status, probation, pre-sentence reporting, correctional classification and firearms possession. Complete criminal history records are vital to all components of the criminal justice system, as well as the many non-criminal justice users that utilize the information for employment and licensing decisions.

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

Funding for this program originated in 1992, when Congress initiated a requirement that each state allocate at least five percent of its total Edward Byrne Memorial State and Local Law Enforcement Assistance Formula grant fund for the improvement of criminal justice records. No longer a mandatory set-aside, the Commission approved five percent of the Byrne/JAG FY2008 funding for the Gerald Hardt Memorial Criminal History Records Improvement Grant Program to be allocated to support the development of the Arizona Integrated Criminal Justice Information Systems (AZ ICJIS). Funding is considered for project activities that support strategies under the AZ ICJIS plan adopted by the Commission.

The Commission is presently making these funds available for multiple grants to be allocated directly to state, county, and local criminal justice agencies for projects that will achieve the goals of the Arizona Criminal Justice Records Improvement Program. The Commission has approved $284,251 in federal dollars for these awards. A twenty-five (25%) local cash match will be required for all federal funds disbursed. Grants may be made to any criminal justice agency, including law enforcement, prosecution, probation, courts, jails, or corrections. All projects funded under this program will be for twelve months.

PROGRAM STRATEGY

To achieve the goals of this program, grants will be made to state, county, and local criminal justice agencies for improving the reporting, maintenance, and use of criminal justice records. Agencies should consider data management systems that enhance automated criminal justice records reporting, provide information sharing across jurisdictional boundaries, reduce redundant data entry, provide courts and the central state repository with final disposition information of criminal charges, or promote connectivity to existing systems that align with the AZ ICJIS plan. Preference will be given to projects intended to develop or enhance procedures and/or systems designed to ensure that information on arrests and/or dispositions are included in and accessible through the database of criminal history records central state repository at the Arizona Department of Public Safety. An emphasis on increasing information sharing, leveraging resources by participating or increasing the system capability to participate in successful automation or integration projects, or promoting the secure transfer of criminal justice information is preferred. Due to funding limitations, it is suggested that agencies work together to facilitate automated interfaces at the local level.

ALLOWABLE COSTS

Grants provided under this program will be one-time awards. Although additional funds may be available in future years, no assumptions should be made as to its availability. Therefore, requests should not be made to fund new personnel or any other ongoing activity or cost, unless separate ongoing funding is identified. Eligible expenses include equipment purchases, software developments or purchases, and costs related to contractual or consulting services. Personnel costs, such as overtime or other expenses intended to clear existing backlogs of records, will be allowed with the submittal of a plan to eliminate the initial cause of the backlog.

ALLOCATION PROCESS

Applications will be reviewed by a selection committee. Commission staff will prepare a proposed allocation plan. The proposed allocation of funds will be based on the amount requested and the following factors:

(a)   The extent to which the proposed activities align with the goals of the Arizona Integrated Criminal Justice Information System (AZ ICJIS) Strategic Plan adopted by the Arizona Criminal Justice Commission.

(b)   The extent to which the proposed activities impact the accuracy, completeness, timeliness, and/or automation of criminal justice records, including arrest and/or disposition information.

(c)   The technical feasibility of the proposal and extent to which the proposal appears reasonable in light of the agency's current level of system development.

(d)   The reasonableness of the budget.

(e)   The extent to which the application reflects a constructive interface between relevant components of the local and state criminal justice systems.

This proposed allocation plan will be submitted to the Information and Technology Committee of the Commission for review.   The Committee will formulate a recommendation regarding the allocation plan, which will be forwarded to the Arizona Criminal Justice Commission for review and final action.   The proposed allocation plan will be made available to all applicants in the meeting agendas. Funds will then be disbursed to agencies in accordance with the Commission's final approved allocation plan. Funds will be disbursed to agencies on a reimbursement basis upon submission of a report showing expenditure.

APPEAL PROCESS

Applicants are entitled to a two step appeal process if their application is denied. The staff review of the applications results in a funding proposal presented to the appropriate Committee of the Arizona Criminal Justice Commission. If your application is not included in the initial proposal, you have the right to verbally appeal to the Committee. At that point, the Committee will either continue as proposed by staff and recommend the proposal to the Commission or make changes and recommend the revised proposal to the Commission. If your application is not recommended by the Committee, you have the right to verbally appeal the Commission. The Commission can then either approve the recommendation of the Committee, or make changes to the Committee proposal. The vote of the Commission is the final step of the process and no further appeals will be granted.

APPLICATION PROCESS

The Arizona Criminal Justice Commission manages an online application process for the Gerald Hardt Memorial Criminal Justice Records Improvement Program. Applicants will create, submit, and monitor their application through a private, secure web page. Upon verification of eligibility to apply for funds, a login and password will be sent via e-mail. The application will need to be completed on this web page and submitted electronically. If applicants do not have internet access or are having difficulties with the system and would like to complete the form manually, this may done by calling ACJC's office at (602) 364-1146.

PROGRAM PRIORITIES

The goal of the CJRIP program is to improve and enhance the quality, completeness, timeliness, and accessibility of criminal history record information and to support the nationwide implementation of criminal justice and non-criminal justice background check systems. Proposed activities must align with the goals of the Arizona Integrated Criminal Justice Information System (AZ ICJIS) Strategic Plan adopted by the Arizona Criminal Justice Commission.

GRANT FUNDED RECORDS INTEGRATION PROJECT REQUIREMENTS

Due to the limited federal budget for criminal justice records integration, grant applications are becoming more restrictive and a strong emphasis is being placed on collaboration and multi-agency representation. To insure continued cooperation and success of projects, the following requirements are to be included in the Arizona Criminal Justice Commission grant-funded records integration projects:

1. A project team must be established that includes a representative of each agency that is involved in the project.

2. A project business justification plan which includes the following:
   A. Project scope
   B. Funding requirement
   C. Governance of project
   D. List of agencies involved
   E. Project goals and objectives
   F. Critical success factors
   G. Assumptions
   H. Anticipated return on investment
   I. High level milestone plan which includes the following:
      • Estimate for system requirements completion (time required or by completion date)
      • Evaluation and performance measures defined for improvements to the timeliness, accuracy, and completeness of criminal history records (time required or by completion date)
      • Estimate for project security requirements completed (time required or by completion date)
      • Final system testing completion (time required or by completion date)
      • Expected roll-out (date)
      • Transition of maintenance and support of system from grant funding to full operation (time required or by completion date)

3. Project monitoring will be required and include the following sign-off documents:
   A. Project plan finalized (date and signatures of project team members)
   B. Final system testing completed (date and signatures of project team members)
   C. End-user acceptance sign-off (date and signatures of project team members and agency heads)
   D. Production "go-live" sign-off (date and signatures of project team members)

4. Projects involving multi-agency cooperation and requiring long-term commitments for ongoing maintenance and support after the initial project completion shall have a signed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) at start of project to address continued maintenance and support of the project.

The state vision focuses on the following three areas in the information exchange:

BUILD
Build sound architecture for a justice information exchange framework by leveraging the internet.

SECURE
Develop and implement comprehensive security policies that embrace all justice agency operations for the sharing of justice and public safety information among authorized users.

LEVERAGE
Leverage available resources and current initiatives to establish a strategic direction, as well as a tactical implementation plan for cost-effective solutions for ongoing accurate, complete, and timely justice information exchanges.

The Arizona Criminal Justice Commission will continue to coordinate and oversee the allocation of federal and state dollars for projects directly focused on the improvement of criminal history records integration and information exchange. With the focus on unity of efforts and avoidance of duplication, the current governance structure will move forward in defining requirements that support the operational information exchanges, technical infrastructure and data exchange standards, establish policy to address legal and privacy issues surrounding information exchange, measure cost effectiveness of the integration efforts through return on investment (ROI) analysis, and project milestone accomplishments.